

A Quarterly Religious Journal
(Presented by email)

"LIGHT FOR OUR AGE"

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*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119:105*

Feature One: Editorial

Part 1: The Godhead

In this issue I would like to explore with you the concept of the term "Godhead" and what it implies. In the January edition I will continue our thoughts exploring "**Who or What Is the Holy Ghost?**" Unfortunately there has been much confusion with this subject matter. It is my conviction that those things God has revealed about Himself are for us to know. I am also aware that there are "secret things" that have not been revealed to us, and those things we cannot know. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

First, let me note the passages that use the word "Godhead". There are three passages for us to consider:

Acts 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the **Godhead** is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

Colossians 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the **Godhead** bodily.

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and **Godhead**; so that they are without excuse:

The term “Godhead” comes to us from these Greek words:

“thi-os”	Acts 17:29	“godlike” [neuter as noun, <i>divinity</i>]:- divine, Godhead
“theh-ot’-ace”	Colossians 2:9	“divinity” [abstractly]:- “Godhead”
“thi-ot’-ace”	Romans 1:20	“divinity” [abstractly]:- “Godhead”

These definitions come from *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*. *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon* clarifies the Greek word in the Colossian text to mean, “the state of being God, Godhead”.

According to the *Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary*, the English term “Godhead” comes to us from the concept of “Godhood”. Just as we use the word “manhood” to refer to those attributes that we apply to being human, we should think of “Godhead” as referring to those concepts that we would use to identify deity. For instance, we think of deity as being all knowing, all powerful, everlasting, etc.

One of the concepts that confuse people is the use of the concept that there is one God. Does this mean that Jesus and the Father are the same being, and that the Holy Spirit is merely the “action” of God on people? That is what some believe. This view presents many problems, however. How could Jesus while on the cross commend his spirit to the Father, for as he said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46). Peter also told Ananias and Sapphira that they had not lied to men, but unto God referring to the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

I have head it argued that the passage in Matthew 28:19 refers to Jesus when it says:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

The concept would be that when one is baptized, we should use the name of Jesus, for that is the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What is being missed in this idea however is the definition being used by the word “name”. The Merriam-Webster on line dictionary identifies the word name, when used with the expression “in the name of” to mean as follows:

— **in the name of:** by authority of <open *in the name of* the law>

It is by the authority of the Father, and the authority of the Son, and the authority of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit that the baptism is to be performed. It is not by men’s authority.

What, then, does the Bible mean when it used the designation of “one God”? We can find several instances where this us used, but a couple of these are:

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:”

John 10:30 I and my Father are one.

We need to remember, however, that in the English language a word can have several definitions. What do we mean by one? Should we automatically believe it to be referring to “one being”? I believe the best definition can be found in the text when Jesus was praying to his Father before his crucifixion. In John 17:20-21 Jesus prayed:

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one;

as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Here we see Jesus praying that we (those that believe on him) will be “one” in the same sense that he is “one” with the Father. Is he asking that we become one being? How can we be “one”? The answer is in unity. The Bible often speaks of our being unified, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:10:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

That follows the concept of the prayer, for Jesus wanted people to believe, and our religious division causes people to doubt and turn away.

Understanding that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are unified in all ways, next quarter I would like to turn our attention to the work of the Holy Spirit today.

Feature 2: an article by R. C. Oliver

This is the fourth in the series of articles on the subject “Why I Believe” that I am sharing with you this year from “Light” by my father, R. C. Oliver.

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH

In continuing the series on *Why I Believe*, I shall, in this lesson, present some of my reasons for believing in, and being identified with, the church of Christ.

In writing about believing in the church, I do not mean to imply that I believe in the church in the same sense that I believe in Christ; rather, because of my faith in Christ, I have accepted His church, and my reasons for accepting His church, in preference to all others, is the burden of this lesson.

Just as I have previous pointed out two basic and fundamental reasons for believing in God, even so, I wish now to point out two basic and

fundamental reasons for believing in the church of Christ: I am a member of the church of Christ because of her *theory and practice*.

When I speak of the theoretical aspect of the church as one of her magnetic attractions, I am speaking about what she teaches. In order to be brief, for space demands brevity, I am a member of the church of Christ because she believes and teaches the all sufficiency of the word of God -2 Tim. 3:16-17. Whatever the Bible says about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, man, heaven, *hell et cetera*, that's exactly what the church believes and teaches about it.

In terms of the abstract, I am a member of the church of Christ because the Bible teaches that the church is God's family (I Tim. 3:15), and I realize that one cannot be saved without being a member of God's family-a child of God.

A further subjective reason is the fact that the church is Christ's body (Colossians 1:18), and I realize that in order to be saved one must be in Christ.

Again, I am a member of the church of Christ because of its origin, which occurred upon the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. Neither can any church, either older or younger than that, be the true church. Please read: Isaiah 2:1-2 cf. Luke 24:46-53 and Acts 2; Daniel 2:44 cf. Mark 1:14-1,5; Matthew 16:18; Mark 9:1 cf. Acts 1:8 cf. Acts 2:1-47.

Thus far we have only thought in terms of some of the subjective or theoretical aspects of the church; let us now turn our attention to some of its practical characteristics. Here we will be talking about what the church actually does - her practice.

The practical aspect of the church is two-fold: *worship* and *work*, and these aspects in turn are each two-fold: the worship must be in *spirit and truth*, and the work must *embrace benevolence and evangelism*.

On each Lord's Day (Sunday) the church of Christ assembles for worship in various local groups, each of which when fully organized has elders to oversee and deacons to serve, and in their assemblies they are instructed to worship God with their hearts, and according to His word. On each Lord's Day they therefore come together for the purpose of singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12 cf. 13:15); prayers (I Timothy 2:1-4); the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7); instructions (Acts 2:42 cf. Acts 20:28) ; and fellowship (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Also, common throughout the week are other special services which are for purposes, such as: instructions, singing, prayer *et cetera*.

Neither are these local groups instructed to remain passive; rather, they are very energetic in all phases of their work and worship, both at home and

abroad. And though each congregation is an independent unit within itself, yet it recognizes the "tie" of Christian love and fellowship that binds it to all other congregations of like precious faith. And even though each recognizes its independence, yet whenever any one congregation is faced with some Christian work, whether benevolent or evangelistic, which it cannot do alone, then all others of like precious faith will join together in helping that one do a work which it otherwise could not do alone, and yet at no time is the local autonomy of either those congregations contributing, or the one receiving, destroyed.

One Bible example of such co-operation is recorded in I Corinthians 16:1-4, where several congregations were *divinely* instructed to help the Jerusalem church in a benevolent work which she could not do alone; and a current example is where several churches, following that same New Testament principle, have co-operated in helping The Highland Church of Christ, in Abilene, Texas, conduct a national radio program, "The Herald of Truth," which the Highland church could not do alone. And though many other like examples could be given in both benevolence and evangelism, yet these will suffice to show the churches believe in working, and that they believe in working together. And though Paul may have had some opposition from some of the Gentile Christians who didn't want to send relief to the Jewish Christians, and though here and there we may have our Sanballats and Tobiahs today, men who at first laughed and said it couldn't be done, and who now have "conspired all of them together to come and fight against it" (Read here the first four chapters of Nehemiah, especially, the fourth), yet I thank God that we have enough Nehemiahs left to prove to the Catholic, Protestant, and Atheistic world, as well as to some of our own, that the church today can accomplish the work whereunto she has been sent, and in the way God has told her to do it.

Feature 3: Our Communication ---

Lying By Deceit

This recently I was teaching some listening skills to my high school students in our public speaking class. I began by asking if they heard about the big car race. I told them that George Windsor came in second, and Larry Pappas was next to last. Then I shared with them it was a drag race, and only two cars were in the race. If you will notice I did not lie about their placement, but I purposely misled them by

keeping vital information from them. This is an example of lying by deceit. God's word teaches us a lesson about lying by deceit in a well-known Old Testament story. This is a good example of what is intended by the passage in Romans 15:4.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

When Abram took Sarai his wife into Egypt he feared for his life. He was afraid Pharaoh would kill him and take her. Notice the story as recorded in Genesis 12.

Gen 12:11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon: 12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. 13 Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. 14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she *was* very fair. 15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

In fact Abram, or Abraham as we know him, was telling the truth. Sarai or Sarah was indeed his half-sister. In this case his intent was obviously to deceive with the truth. He did not tell all of the truth.

Be aware that God's position on lying is clear.

Proverbs 6:16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Also notice Revelation makes this as a closing remark in chapter 21.

Verse 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters,

and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

We should always be aware of the fact that we will be judged by the words we speak, or in this case, fail to speak.

Feature 4: Bible Questions

If you have a Bible question send it to me by email and I will enjoy studying it with our readers. If it is a question to which you would like an immediate answer, indicate that and I will try to return it to you personally. Remember, if you would like to communicate with me, use my school email address in that this is the one I most often use. (boliver@mccallie.org)

Who was Melchizedek?

We read about the man Melchizedek both in the Old and the New Testaments. In Genesis 14 the Bible recounts the battle that took place when Lot and his family lived in Sodom. Lot was captured, and Abraham and his servants went up against the armies that had Lot captive. Abram and his servants defeated them and rescued Lot and all of the captives and treasures. It was then that we are introduced to Melchizedek. In verses 18-20 the text reads:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all.

The Psalmist also wrote in Psalms 110:1-4:

A Psalm of David. Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3 Thy people offer themselves willingly In the day of thy power, in holy array: Out of the

womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of thy youth. 4
Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for
ever After the order of Melchizedek.

In this text we see the promise made that the Savior would be a priest
in the manner of Melchizedek. His priesthood would not be like unto the
priesthood of Aaron. Consider the following passages from the Hebrew
writer.

5:5 So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but
he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten
thee: 6 as he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most
High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the
kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham divided a
tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of
righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of
peace; 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy,
having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like
unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually. 4 Now
consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the
patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils. 5 And they
indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have
commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law,
that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the
loins of Abraham: 6 but he whose genealogy is not counted
from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him
that hath the promises. 7 But without any dispute the less is
blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes;
but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And, so
to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath
paid tithes; 10 for he was yet in the loins of his father, when
Melchizedek met him. 11 Now if there was perfection through
the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received
the law), what further need was there that another priest should
arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after
the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there
is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of

whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. 15 And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, 16 who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: 17 for it is witnessed of him, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek.

These are the passages that discuss this remarkable man. It is interesting that it says of him that he is “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life” Unless God made a separate creation of this man, this text would not be speaking of literal parents, but of his priesthood. We know that the Aaronic priesthood depended on being of the genealogy of Levi, and more specifically, of Aaron. Who a man’s parents were was important determining who could be a priest in Israel. With Melchizedek, his priesthood depended not on parents but was given to him by God.

We see in the passage in Psalms 110 that the Christ would also be a priest in this manner. It was not bestowed because of his family, or tribe, for as the Hebrew writer wrote in verse 14: “For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests”.

The importance of Melchizedek was to show the Jewish nation that a priest existed in the past that was not descended from Aaron.

I read something some years ago that did intrigue me. If you examine the ages of the people before the flood, you will notice that in Genesis 11:10 and following that Shem, the son of Noah, would have been 98 years old at the time of the flood. He lived after the flood for 498 years. If we examine the ages of the descendants after Shem were born we will see that Shem was 388 years of age when Abraham was born. Yet he lived to be almost 600 years of age. He would still have been alive in Abraham’s day. Might Melchizedek have been the King of Salem, (a forerunner of the city of Jerusalem)? Obviously that is purely speculation, but I find it intriguing none-the-less.

Humor:

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in

Sunday school. “Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely.

Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved.”

“Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?” his Mother asked.

“Well, no, Mom. But, if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!”

In Closing:

This is the last edition of our second year. For my part, I have enjoyed being able to visit with you in this way. Always feel free to send to me email addresses of your friends and relatives. It would be great to have them join us. Also send me any questions or comments you may have. I will include them in future editions of “Light for Our Age”

In the Master’s service,

Bob Oliver